

Agility

Agilité canine à Nouméa

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Duck Island, Nouméa.

At the end of October 2021, I received an email invitation which resulted in me spending a wonderful week making new friends in Nouméa, New Caledonia, in July 2022. It very nearly didn't happen when I came down with COVID-19 just two weeks before the show. Luckily, I recovered quickly enough to make the trip and what a fantastic time it was.

The club in Nouméa (Club Canin Dumbéa) has been running Agility for 10 years and has previously used judges from their home association in France.

Competitions are run under French and FCI rules. Under the French rules, your grade in both Agility and Jumpers is determined by your advancement in Agility classes so you are always in the same grade for both flavours.

The Société Centrale Canine (French kennel club) follows the 2018 FCI rules and there are three jump heights (250-300mm, 350-400mm and 550-600mm) with the dog height cut-offs being 350mm and

430mm for the two lower heights. I judged Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes. At this moment there are no Grade 3 dogs currently competing in Nouméa, with previous ones having recently retired. Grade 1 Agility/Jumpers is open to those who have not been awarded 'agility dog' qualification and is equivalent of our Novice class but includes all gear.

Grade 2 Agility/Jumpers is open to those who have been awarded agility dog but no further qualification (set at Intermediate level).

I was told that 29 degrees and very high humidity is very rare in July, but it was a lovely change from the temperatures at home in the middle of winter so I wasn't complaining.

There were some fantastic runs, some very nearly fantastic runs, some dogs which were just having a lot of fun, and others found some stuff to work on. It was lovely to see the variety of dogs in the classes with a mix of purebred and mixed breed dogs, just like we have here.

The equipment was excellent, being all Galican gear, and I had my first experience with a 'soft' wall-jump which is very cool — provided there is no wind.

It was a lovely day with people winning with pride and losing with grace followed by a group lunch together in the open clubrooms.

On Sunday, I did a morning's seminar focussing on positioning on course to provide the most information to the dog as possible and discussed various options for handling course challenges. Everyone was very keen and although it was still very hot, the increase in confidence and drive in some of the dogs at the end of the session was awesome. Huge thanks to Veronique for the translation services.

My hosts (Mia and Olivier) were amazing and so much fun. They



Training on Sunday.



The club grounds.

All of the helpers on the day were very easily identifiable. A great example of a small club with members making the day run smoothly.

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went out of their way to take me out and about with a snorkelling trip and sightseeing as well as sampling some fantastic food. It's a fabulous place.

So, to all of you Senior judges with more than three years' experience who are keen to meet new people and judge in a different environment, contact the Agility Committee and apply to be added to the FCI judges list. It can open doors to more friendship and fun and you never know where it might lead. 🐾

Fiona Hodgson



Getting to know one of the up-and-coming dogs in Noumea — 'Magic', owned by Fabrice, a particularly well-travelled dog now turning his paw to Agility.

